Creation Stories from around the World

Encapsulations of some traditional stories explaining the origin of the Earth, its life, and its peoples

Fourth Edition July 2000

Table of Contents

Preface		
1	**The Four Creations**	**Hopi**
2	**Odin and Ymir**	**Norse**
3	**The Separation of Heaven and Earth**	**Maori**
4	**The Story of Corn and Medicine**	**Cherokee**
5	**The Origin of Japan and Her People**	**Japan**
6	**Death, and Life and Death**	**Kono**
7	**The Creation and the Emergence**	**Jicarilla Apache**
8	**Creation by and of the Self**	**India**
9	**Marduk Creates the World from the Spoils of Battle**	**Babylonia**
10	**The Golden Chain**	**Yoruba**
11	**The Menominee and Manabush**	**Menominee**
12	**The Naba Zid-Wendé**	**Mossi**
13	**Pan Gu and Nü Wa**	**China**
14	**Yahweh**	**Hebrew**
15	**The Elohim**	**Hebrew**
16	**A Potawatomi Story**	**Potawatomi**
17	**Birth in the Dawn**	**Hawaii**
18	**Life from Moon and the Stars**	**Wakaranga**
19	**Two Brothers and their Grandmother**	**Seneca**
20	**The Moon and the Morning Star**	**Wichita**
Afterword:	**Chief Seattle's Speech**	**Dwamish**
Summation		

Note on page iii of the print edition: This book is not copyrighted by the author and may be freely reproduced, so long as it is not copyrighted by those who reproduce it, and so long as it is not sold for more than the cost of reproducing and binding. The author receives no money from the sale of this book.

This story comes from the Hopi people of northern Arizona. "Hopi" means "People of Peace". The stories here were recorded in the 1950s by Oswald White Bear Fredericks and his wife Naomi from the storytelling of older Hopi at the village of Oraibi, which tree-ring dating indicates has been inhabited by the Hopi since at least 1150 AD.

The Four Creations

The world at first was endless space in which existed only the Creator, Taiowa. This world had no time, no shape, and no life, except in the mind of the Creator. Eventually the infinite creator created the finite in Sotuknang, whom he called his nephew and whom he created as his agent to establish nine universes. Sotuknang gathered together matter from the endless space to make the nine solid worlds. Then the Creator instructed him to gather together the waters from the endless space and place them on these worlds to make land and sea. When Sotuknang had done that, the Creator instructed him to gather together air to make winds and breezes on these worlds.

The fourth act of creation with which the Creator charged Sotuknang was the creation of life. Sotuknang went to the world that was to first host life and there he created Spider Woman, and he gave her the power to create life. First Spider Woman took some earth and mixed it with saliva to make two beings. Over them she sang the Creation Song, and they came to life. She instructed one of them, Poqanghoya, to go across the earth and solidify it. She instructed the other, Palongawhoya, to send out sound to resonate through the earth, so that the earth vibrated with the energy of the Creator. Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya were despatched to the poles of the earth to keep it rotating.

Then Spider Woman made all the plants, the flowers, the bushes, and the trees. Likewise she made the birds and animals, again using earth and singing the Creation Song. When all this was done, she made human beings, using yellow, red, white, and black earth mixed with her saliva. Singing the Creation Song, she made four men, and then in her own form she made four women. At first they had a soft spot in their foreheads, and although it solidified, it left a space through which they could hear the voice of Sotuknang and their Creator. Because these people could not speak, Spider Woman called on Sotuknang, who gave them four languages. His only instructions were for them to respect their Creator and to live in harmony with him.

These people spread across the earth and multiplied. Despite their four languages, in those days they could understand each other's thoughts anyway, and for many years they and the animals lived together as one. Eventually, however, they began to divide, both the people from the animals and the people from each other, as they focused on their differences rather than their similarities. As division and suspicion became more widespread, only a few people from each of the four groups still remembered their Creator. Sotuknang appeared before these few and told them that he and the Creator would have to destroy this world, and that these few who remembered the Creator must travel across the land, following a cloud and a star, to find refuge. These people began

their treks from the places where they lived, and when they finally converged Sotuknang appeared again. He opened a huge ant mound and told these people to go down in it to live with the ants while he destroyed the world with fire, and he told them to learn from the ants while they were there. The people went down and lived with the ants, who had storerooms of food that they had gathered in the summer, as well as chambers in which the people could live. This went on for quite a while, because after Sotuknang cleansed the world with fire it took a long time for the world to cool off. As the ants' food ran low, the people refused the food, but the ants kept feeding them and only tightened their own belts, which is why ants have such tiny waists today.

Finally Sotuknang was done making the second world, which was not quite as beautiful as the first. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they and the ants that had hosted them spread across the earth. The people multiplied rapidly and soon covered the entire earth. They did not live with the animals, however, because the animals in this second world were wild and unfriendly. Instead the people lived in villages and built roads between these, so that trade sprang up. They stored goods and traded those for goods from elsewhere, and soon they were trading for things they did not need. As their desire to have more and more grew, they began to forget their Creator, and soon wars over resources and trade were breaking out between villages. Finally Sotuknang appeared before the few people who still remembered the Creator, and again he sent them to live with the ants while he destroyed this corrupt world. This time he ordered Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya to abandon their posts at the poles, and soon the world spun out of control and rolled over. Mountains slid and fell, and lakes and rivers splashed across the land as the earth tumbled, and finally the earth froze over into nothing but ice.

This went on for years, and again the people lived with the ants. Finally Sotuknang sent Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya back to the poles to resume the normal rotation of the earth, and soon the ice melted and life returned. Sotuknang called the people up from their refuge, and he introduced them to the third world that he had made. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they spread across the land. As they did so, they multiplied quickly, even more quickly than before, and soon they were living in large cities and developing into separate nations. With so many people and so many nations, soon there was war, and some of the nations made huge shields on which they could fly, and from these flying shields they attacked other cities. When Sotuknang saw all this war and destruction, he resolved to destroy this world quickly before it corrupted the few people who still remembered the Creator. He called on Spider Woman to gather those few and, along the shore, she placed each person with a little food in the hollow stem of a reed. When she had done this, Sotuknang let loose a flood that destroyed the warring cities and the world on which they lived.

Once the rocking of the waves ceased, Spider Woman unsealed the reeds so the people could see. They floated on the water for many days, looking for land, until finally they drifted to an island. On the island they built little reed boats and set sail again to the east. After drifting many days, they came to a larger island, and after many more days to

an even larger island. They hoped that this would be the fourth world that S?tuknang had made for them, but Spider Woman assured them that they still had a long and hard journey ahead. They walked across this island and built rafts on the far side, and set sail to the east again. They came to a fourth and still larger island, but again they had to cross it on foot and then build more rafts to continue east. From this island, Spider Woman sent them on alone, and after many days they encountered a vast land. Its shores were so high that they could not find a place to land, and only by opening the doors in their heads did they know where to go to land.

When they finally got ashore, Sotuknang was there waiting for them. As they watched to the west, he made the islands that they had used like stepping stones disappear into the sea. He welcomed them to the fourth world, but he warned them that it was not as beautiful as the previous ones, and that life here would be harder, with heat and cold, and tall mountains and deep valleys. He sent them on their way to migrate across the wild new land in search of the homes for their respective clans. The clans were to migrate across the land to learn its ways, although some grew weak and stopped in the warm climates or rich lands along the way. The Hopi trekked and far and wide, and went through the cold and icy country to the north before finally settling in the arid lands between the Colorado River and Rio Grande River. They chose that place so that the hardship of their life would always remind them of their dependence on, and link to, their Creator.

This is a synthesis of several stories from the Cherokee, who were the native people of northern Georgia and Alabama, western North Carolina, central and eastern Tennessee, and Kentucky. The stories were told to James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology in the late 1800's by older Cherokee men in western North Carolina. The principal story teller was Ayúnini ("Swimmer"), who was born in 1835 and never spoke English, although he served as sergeant in the Confederate infantry in the Civil War. He died in 1899.

The Story of Corn and Medicine

The earth began as nothing but water and darkness, and all the animals were in Galúnlati, above the stone vault that makes up the sky. Eventually Galúnlati became so crowded that the animals needed more room, and they wanted to move down to earth. Not knowing what was below the water, they sent down the Water-beetle to explore. Water-beetle dove below the water and eventually came back with some mud from below. That mud grew and grew, and finally it became the island that we call earth. This island of earth is suspended at its four corners from ropes that hang down from the sky, and legend has it that some day the ropes will break and the earth will sink back into the water.

Because it grew from mud, the new earth was very soft. Many of the birds flew down to explore the new land, but it was too wet for them to stay. Finally Buzzard flew down, hoping it was dry, but the earth was still wet. Buzzard searched and searched, especially in the Cherokee country, and finally he became so tired that his wings flapped against the ground. His wings dug valleys where they hit the ground and turned up mountains where they pulled away, leaving the rugged country of the Cherokee.

Eventually the earth was dry and the animals moved down. There still was no light, however, and so the animals set the sun passing from east to west just over their heads. With the sun so close, many of the animals were burned, giving the red crawfish its crimson color. The animals raised the sun again and again, until it was high enough that all could survive.

When the plants and animals first came to earth, they were told to stay awake for seven nights, as in the Cherokee medicine ceremony. The animals all stayed awake the first night, and many stayed awake the next few nights, but only the owl and the panther and a couple of others stayed awake all seven nights. They were given the ability to see at night and so to hunt at night when the others are asleep. The same thing happened among the trees, and only the cedar, pine, spruce, holly and laurel stayed awake all seven nights, which is why they can stay green all year when the others lose their leaves.

Humans came after the animals. At first they multiplied rapidly, and the first woman give birth every seven days. Eventually there were so many of them that it seemed they might not all survive, and since then to this day each woman has been able to have just

one child each year. Among these early people were a man and a woman name Kanáti and Selu, whose names meant "The Lucky Hunter" and "Corn", respectively. Kanáti would go hunting and invariably return with game, which Selu would prepare by the stream near their home. She also would always return home with baskets of corn, which she would pound to make meal for bread.

Kanáti and Selu had a little boy, and he would play by the stream. Eventually they realized that he was playing with another little boy who had arisen from the blood of the game washed by the stream. With their son's help they caught the other boy, and eventually he lived with them like he was their own son, although he was called "the Wild Boy".

Kanáti brought home game whenever he went hunting, and one day the two boys decided to follow him. They followed him into the mountains until he came to a large rock, which he pulled aside to reveal a cave from which a buck emerged. Kanáti shot the buck and, after covering the cave, he headed home. The boys got home before him and didn't reveal what they had learned, but a few days later they returned to the rock. With a struggle they pulled it aside and had great fun watching the deer come out of the cave. They lost track of what they were doing, however, and soon all sorts of game animals - rabbit and turkeys and partridges and buffalo and all - escaped from the cave. Kanáti saw all these animals coming down the mountain and knew what the boys must have done, and he went up the mountain after them. He opened four jars in the cave, and from them came fleas and lice and gnats and bedbugs that attacked the boys. He sent them home, hoping he could find some of the dispersed game for the supper. Thus it is that people must now hunt for game.

The boys went home, and Selu told them there would be no meat for dinner. However, she went to the storehouse for food, and told the boys to wait while she did so. They followed her instead to the storehouse and watched her go inside. She put down her basket and then rubbed her stomach, and the basket was partly full with corn. Then she rubbed her sides, and it was full to the top with beans. Watching through a crack in the storehouse wall, the boys saw all this. Selu knew that they had seen her, but she went ahead and fixed them a last meal. Then she and Kanáti explained that, because their secrets were revealed, they would die, and with them would end the easy life they had known. However, Selu told them to drag her body seven times around a circle in front of their house, and then to drag her seven times over the soil inside the circle, and if they stayed up all night to watch, in the morning they would have a crop of corn. The boys, however, only cleared a few spots and they only dragged her body over it twice, which is why corn only grows in certain places on the earth. They did sit up all night, though, and in the morning the corn was grown, and still it is grown today, although now it takes half a year.

In these early days, the plants, the animals, and the people all lived together as friends. As the people multiplied, however, the animals had less room to roam, and they were either slaughtered for food or trampled under the humans' feet. Finally the animals

held a council to discuss what to do. The bears experimented with using bows and arrows to fight back, but they concluded that they would have to cut off their claws to use the bows. The deer held a council and decided to send rheumatism to any hunter who killed a deer without asking its pardon for having done so. When a deer is shot by a hunter, the fleet and silent Little Deer, leader of the deer, runs to the blood-stained spot to ask the spirit of the killed deer if the hunter prayed for pardon for his affront. If the answer is no, Little Deer follows the trail of blood and inflicts the hunter with rheumatism so that he is crippled.

The fish and reptiles likewise met, and resolved that the people would suffer from dreams in which snakes twined about them. The birds and smaller animals and insects all met too, and talked long into the night about how they had suffered from the humans. Eventually they created all sorts of new diseases to afflict humans, which have since become a scourge to the animals' oppressors.

After this the plants met, and they resolved that something must be done to counteract what the animals had done. That is why so many trees and shrubs and herbs, and even the mosses, provide remedies for diseases. It was thus that medicine first came into the world, to counteract the revenge of the animals.

James Mooney, 1900, Myths of the Cherokee: Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for 1897-1898, Part 1, p. 1-576. (J84.SI2.1 pt. 1 1897-98)

This story is condensed from five very detailed stories told by the Jicarilla Apaches. The Jicarilla are one of six tribes of the Apaches of the southwestern U.S., and they have a voluminous folkore. These stories were compiled and translated by Morris Opler in the 1930's. In addition to telling the story of the creation and emergence and explaining the world, the stories reflect the Jicarilla disregard for the shamans found in some other Native American religions, and they reflect the sacredness of fours in every thing and every behavior.

The Creation and the Emergence

In the beginning there was nothing - no earth, no living beings. There were only darkness, water, and Cyclone, the wind. There were no humans, but only the Hactcin, the Jicarilla supernatural beings. The Hactcin made the earth, the underworld beneath it, and the sky above it. The earth they made as a woman who faces upward, and the sky they made as a man who faces downward. The Hactcin lived in the underworld, where there was no light. There were mountains and plants in the underworld, and each had its own Hactcin. There were as yet no animals or humans, and everything in the underworld existed in a dream-like state and was spiritual and holy.

The most powerful of the Hactcin in the underworld was Black Hactcin. One day Black Hactcin made the first animal with four legs and a tail made of clay. At first he thought it looked peculiar, but when he asked it to walk and saw how gracefully it walked, he decided it was good. Knowing this animal would be lonely, he made many other kinds of animals come from the body of the first. He laughed to see the diversity of the animals he had created. All the animals wanted to know what to eat and where to live, so he divided the foods among them, giving grass to the horse, sheep, and cow, and to others he gave brush, leaves, and pine needles. He sent them out to different places, some to the mountains, some to the deserts, and some to the plains, which is why the animals are found in different places today.

Next Black Hactcin held out his hand and caught a drop of rain. He mixed this with some earth to make mud and made a bird from the mud. At first he wasn't sure he would like what he had made. He asked the bird to fly, and when it did he liked it. He decided the bird too would be lonely, so he grabbed it and whirled it rapidly clockwise. As the bird became dizzy, it saw images of other birds, and when Black Hactcin stopped whirling it, there were indeed many new kinds of birds, all of which live in the air because they were made from a drop of water that came from the air. Black Hactcin sent the birds out to find places they liked to live, and when they returned he gave each the place that they liked. To feed them, he threw seeds all over the ground. To tease them, however, he turned the seeds into insects, and he watched as they chased after the insects. At a river nearby, he told the birds to drink. Again, however, he couldn't resist teasing them, so he took some moss and made fish, frogs, and the other things that live in water. This frightened the birds as they came to drink, and it is why birds so often hop back in

fright as they come down to drink. As some of the birds took off, their feathers fell in the water, and from them came the ducks and other birds that live in the water.

Black Hactcin continued to make more animals and birds. The animals and birds that already existed all spoke the same language, and they held a council. They came to Black Hactcin and asked for a companion. They were concerned that they would be alone when Black Hactcin left them, and Black Hactcin agreed to make something to keep them company. He stood facing the east, and then the south, and then the west, and then the north. He had the animals bring him all sorts of materials from across the land, and he traced his outline on the ground. He then set the things that they brought him in the outline. The turquoise that they brought became veins, the red ochre became blood, the coral became skin, the white rock became bones, the Mexican opal became fingernails and teeth, the jet became the pupil, the abalone became the white of the eyes, and the white clay became the marrow of the bones. Pollen, iron ore, and water scum were used too, and Black Hactcin used a dark cloud to make the hair.

The man they had made was lying face down, and it began to rise as the birds watched with excitement. The man arose from prone, to kneeling, to sitting up, and to standing. Four times Black Hactcin told him to speak, and he did. Four times Black Hactcin told him to laugh, and he did. It was likewise with shouting. Then Black Hactcin taught him to walk, and had him run four times in a clockwise circle.

The birds and animals were afraid the man would be lonely, and they asked Black Hactcin give him company. Black Hactcin asked them for some lice, which he put on the man's head. The man went to sleep scratching, and he dreamed that there was a woman beside him. When he awoke, she was there. They asked Black Hactcin what they would eat, and he told them that the plants and the cloven-hoofed animals would be their food. They asked where they should live. He told them to stay anywhere they liked, which is why the Jicarilla move from place to place.

These two, Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman, had children, and the people multiplied. In those days no one died, although they all lived in darkness. This lasted for many years. Holy Boy, another Apache spirit, was unhappy with the darkness, and he tried to make a sun. As he worked at it, Cyclone came by and told him that White Hactcin had a sun. Holy Boy went to White Hactcin, who gave him the sun, and he went to Black Hactcin, who gave him the moon. Black Hactcin told Holy Boy how to make a sacred drawing on a buckskin to hold the sun and moon, and Holy Boy, Red Boy, Black Hactcin, and White Hactcin held a ceremony at which White Hactcin released the sun and Black Hactcin released the moon. The light grew stronger as the sun moved from north to south, and eventually it was like daylight is now.

The people didn't know what this was, and the shamans each began to claim that they had power over the sun. On the fourth day, there was an eclipse. After the sun had disappeared, the Hactcins told the shamans to make the sun reappear. The shamans tried all kinds of tricks, but they couldn't make the sun come back. To solve the problem, White Hactcin turned to the animals and had them bring the foods they ate. With the food

and some sand and water, they began to grow a mountain. The mountain grew, but it stopped short of the hole in the sky that led from the underworld to the earth. It turned out that two girls had gone up on the mountain and had trampled the sacred plants and even had defecated there. White Hactcin, Black Hactcin, Holy Boy, and Red Boy had to go up the mountain and clean it. When they came down and the people sang, and the mountain grew again. It stopped, however, just short of the hole, and when the four went up again they could only see to the other earth. They sent up Fly and Spider, who took four rays of the sun and built a rope ladder to the upper world. Spider was the first one to climb to the upper world, where the sun was bright.

White Hactcin, Black Hactcin, Holy Boy, and Red Boy climbed up the ladder, and they found much water on the earth. They sent for the four winds to blow the water away, and Beaver came up to build dams to hold the water in rivers. Spider made threads to catch the sun, and they made the sun go from east to west to light the entire world, not just one side. Hactcin called for the people to climb up, and for four days they climbed the mountain. At the top they found four ladders. Ancestral Man and Ancestral Woman were the first people to climb up, and the people climbed up into the upper world that we know today. Thus the earth is our mother, and the people climbed up as from a womb. Then the animals came up, and before long the ladders were worn out. Behind the animals came an old man and an old woman, and they couldn't climb the ladders. No one could get them up, and finally the two realized they had to stay in the underworld. They agreed to stay but told the others they must come back to the underworld eventually, which is why people go to the underworld after death.

Everything in the upper world is alive - the rocks, the trees, the grass, the plants, the fire, the water. Originally they all spoke the Jicarilla Apache language and spoke to the people. The Hactcin, however, decided that it was boring to have all these things speaking the same, so they gave all these things and all the animals different voices.

Eventually the people travelled out clockwise across the land. Different groups would break off and stay behind, and their children would begin to play games in which they used odd languages. The people in these groups began to forget their old languages and use these new ones, which is why now there are many languages. Only one group kept on traveling in the clockwise spiral until they reached the center of the world, and these are the Jicarilla Apaches.

Morris Edward Opler, 1938, Myths and Tales of the Jicarilla Apache Indians: Memoirs of the American Folklore Society Vol. 31, 406 p. (Reprinted by Kraus Reprint Co., New York, 1969). (E99.J5 O6 1938a)

This story is from the the second and fourth Brahmanas of the Brhad-arayaka Upanishad, which was written in India in the 700s or 600s B.C. The principal acter in this story can be taken to be Praja-pati, the Lord of Creation, or Brahma the Creator. Like the original, however, this story uses "he" as its subject, because "he" may taken more metaphorically as any sentient being who creates by his or her own thought.

Creation By and From the Self

In the beginning there was absolutely nothing, and what existed was covered by death and hunger. He thought, "Let me have a self", and he created the mind. As he moved about in worship, water was generated. Froth formed on the water, and the froth eventually solidifed to become earth. He rested on the earth, and from his luminence came fire. After resting, he divided himself in three parts, and one is fire, one is the sun, and one is the air.

Thus in the beginning the world was only his self, his being or essence, which then took the shape of a person. At first he was afraid, but realizing that he was alone and had nothing of which to be afraid, his fear ceased. However, he had no happiness because he was alone, and he longed for another. He grew as large as two persons embracing, and he caused his self to split into two matching parts, like two halves of a split pea, and from them arose husband and wife.

They mated, and from their union arose the human beings of the earth. The female reflected on having mated with someone of whom she was once a part, and she resolved that she should hide so that it would not happen again. She changed to a cow to disguise herself, but he changed to a bull and mated with her, and from their union cows arose. She changed to the form of a mare, but he changed to that of a stallion and mated with her, and from that union came horses. She changed to the form of a donkey, but he did likewise, and from them arose the single-hoofed animals. She became a ewe, but he became a ram, and from their union came the sheep and goats. It continued thus, with her changing form to elude him but he finding her and mating with her, until they had created all the animals that live in pairs, from humans and horses to ants.

After all this work, he reflected that he was indeed Creation personified, for he had created all this. Rubbing back and forth, he made Fire, the god of fire, from his hands, and from his semen he made Soma, the god of the moon. This was his highest creation because, although mortal himself, he had created immortal gods.

S. Radhakrishnan, (editor and translator), 1953, The Principal Upanisads: New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 958 p. (BL1120.E5 R2)

This Babylonian story of creation comes largely from the Enuma Elish and the Astrahasis, which appear to have been written between 1900 and 1500 BC, perhaps during the time of the Babylonian King Hammurabi. The tablets of both are broken and incomplete. At the end of the story here, the details of the creation of humans are supplemented with material from fragments of later writings. The latter may date as late as the 500's BC, but their consistency with the earlier Enuma Elish suggests that they tell the same story. The main actor in these tablets is Marduk, the most powerful of the Babylonian gods. Like most Babylonian gods, he has many names, and elsewhere he is sometimes known as Bel.

Marduk Creates the World from the Spoils of Battle

In the beginning, neither heaven nor earth had names. Apsu, the god of fresh waters, and Tiamat, the goddess of the salt oceans, and Mummu, the god of the mist that rises from both of them, were still mingled as one. There were no mountans, there was no pasture land, and not even a reed-marsh could be found to break the surface of the waters.

It was then that Apsu and Tiamat parented two gods, and then two more who outgrew the first pair. These further parented gods, until Ea, who was the god of rivers and was Tiamat and Apsu's geat-grandson, was born. Ea was the cleverest of the gods, and with his magic Ea became the most powerful of the gods, ruling even his forebears.

Apsu and Tiamat's descendents became an unruly crowd. Eventually Apsu, in his frustration and inability to sleep with the clamor, went to Tiamat, and he proposed to her that he slay their noisy offspring. Tiamat was furious at his suggestion to kill their clan, but after leaving her Apsu resolved to proceed with his murderous plan. When the young gods heard of his plot against them, they were silent and fearful, but soon Ea was hatching a scheme. He cast a spell on Apsu, pulled Apsu's crown from his head, and slew him. Ea then built his palace on Apsu's waters, and it was there that, with the goddess Damkina, he fathered Marduk, the four-eared, four-eyed giant who was god of the rains and storms.

The other gods, however, went to Tiamat and complained of how Ea had slain her husband. Aroused, she collected an army of dragons and monsters, and at its head she placed the god Kingu, whom she gave magical powers as well. Even Ea was at a loss how to combat such a host, until he finally called on his son Marduk. Marduk gladly agreed to take on his father's battle, on the condition that he, Marduk, would rule the gods after achieving this victory. The other gods agreed, and at a banquet they gave him his royal robes and scepter.

Marduk armed himself with a bow and arrows, a club, and lightning, and he went in search of Tiamat's monstrous army. Rolling his thunder and storms in front him, he

attacked, and Kingu's battle plan soon disintegrated. Tiamat was left alone to fight Marduk, and she howled as they closed for battle. They struggled as Marduk caught her in his nets. When she opened her mouth to devour him, he filled it with the evil wind that served him. She could not close her mouth with his gale blasting in it, and he shot an arrow down her throat. It split her heart, and she was slain.

After subduing the rest of her host, he took his club and split Tiamat's water-laden body in half like a clam shell. Half he put in the sky and made the heavens, and he posted guards there to make sure that Tiamat's salt waters could not escape. Across the heavens he made stations in the stars for the gods, and he made the moon and set it forth on its schedule across the heavens. From the other half of Tiamat's body he made the land, which he placed over Apsu's fresh waters, which now arise in wells and springs. From her eyes he made flow the Tigirs and Euphrates. Across this land he made the grains and herbs, the pastures and fields, the rains and the seeds, the cows and ewes, and the forests and the orchards.

Marduk set the vanquished gods who had supported Tiamat to a variety of tasks, including work in the fields and canals. Soon they complained of their work, however, and they rebeled by burning their spades and baskets. Marduk saw a solution to their labors, though, and proposed it to Ea. He had Kingu, Timat's general, brought forward from the ranks of the defeated gods, and Kingu was slain. With Kingu's blood, with clay from the earth, and with spittle from the other gods, Ea and the birth-goddess Nintu created humans. On them Ea imposed the labor previously assigned to the gods. Thus the humans were set to maintain the canals and boundary ditches, to hoe and to carry, to irrigate the land and to raise crops, to raise animals and fill the granaries, and to worship the gods at their regular festivals.

Alexander Heidel, 1952, *The Babylonian Genesis* (2nd edn.): Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 153 p. (BS1236.H4 1963).
Tikva Fryer-Kensky, (trans), *Astrahasis*, in O'Brien, Joan, and Major, Wilfred, 1982, In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, and Greece: Chico, CA, Scholars Press, 211 p. (BL226.O27 1982)

A note on the next two stories:
The Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament, is known to modern readers from the Masoretic text, a compilation of Hebrew texts assembled by Jewish scholars in the seventh to tenth centuries A.D. from older scrolls and codices. That text, and thus the Old Testament, contain two creation stories. It is not unusual for cultures to have multiple creation stories, and throughout this booklet the paraphrases have melded two or more variations of a culture's creation story into one. However, because the two stories in the Old Testament are so different, the two stories are recounted separately here as "Yahweh" and then "The Elohim".

- -

This creation story is from Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 of the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament. Extensive analysis of its style and content have led scholars of the Bible to conclude that the story was written in about the Tenth Century B.C.. That was around the time of King Solomon's reign and in a time when Israel was a powerful nation. In contrast, the story in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 was written three or four centuries later and under very different circumstances.

The author of the story in Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 is known to scholars as "J". That is because J referred to the creator as Yahweh (or "YHVH" in ancient Hebrew, or "Jahweh" in the German native to many scholars of the Bible, or ultimately "Jehovah" in modern usage). The paraphrase below maintains J's use of the Hebrew name "Yahweh" rather than the English word "God". The latter is, after all, only a derivative of the German word "Gott" and is in no way tied to the Hebrew language of the Old Testament or even the Greek of the New Testament.

Some scholars have considered J the more primitive or rural of the two authors of the creation stories in Genesis. Others are more generous and characterize J as a poet rather than a priest. J was probably recording his or her people's oral traditions in written form. Certainly J's story is a more human story of temptation and punishment than the austere story written later by the author known as "P", and J's creator is more anthropomorphic.

In J's story, the humans that are created have names. To English speakers, "Adam" and "Eve" are just names, but "Adam" meant "man" in ancient Hebrew and may also have been a play on "adamah", the Hebrew word for "earth" or "clay". "Eve" was the word for "life".

Yahweh

On the day that Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the land was dry and barren until a mist came up from the earth and wetted the land. Then Yahweh took dust from the earth and shaped it into the form of a man, and he breathed life into that form, and it came to life.

Yahweh created a garden in a place called Eden. In this garden Yahweh placed all the

trees that bear fruit, including the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden and watered the garden, and there it divided to become four rivers that flow to the four corners of the world. Yahweh put the man there and instructed him to cultivate the garden and to eat of whatever fruit he liked, except for fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Then Yahweh decided that the man should not be alone, and that he should have a helper. Thus Yahweh made the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, and the man gave a name to each of them. However, none were fit to be his helper, so Yahweh made the man fall into a deep sleep and took one of the man's ribs, and he made it into a woman. This man was Adam, and the woman's name was Eve.

In the garden was a snake, and the snake persuaded the woman that she could eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil without dying, and that eating the fruit would give her Yahweh's knowledge of good and evil. She ate the fruit, and she gave some to the man too. For the first time they were ashamed of being naked, and so they made aprons for themselves.

When the man and woman heard Yahweh in the garden, they hid from him, but Yahweh called them out and asked why they had hidden. The man explained that they hid because of their scanty clothing. Yahweh asked the man how they knew to be ashamed of nudity, and if they had eaten the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The man explained that the woman had eaten of the fruit and given him some too. When Yahweh asked the woman, she explained that the snake had beguiled her into eating the fruit.

Yahweh said to the snake, "Because of what you have done, you are cursed more than any other animal, and you will have to crawl on your belly in the dust, and you will be beaten by the offspring of this woman". To the woman Yahweh said, "You will be cursed with great pain in giving birth to children, yet you will have the desire to reproduce, and your husband will rule you." Finally, to the man Yahweh said, "Because of what you have done, the ground is cursed and you will never eat of this fruit again. You will grow plants and fields and eat bread until you die, until you become the dust from which you were made."

Then Yahweh said, "This man has become like us, knowing good and evil - next he will seek the tree of life and try to live forever." Therefore Yahweh made the man and woman clothing and drove them out of the Garden of Eden, and he placed a winged half-human, half-lion creature at the Garden's gate to keep them out.

Sources: See the list after the next story.

This, the second of our two Hebrew creation stories, is from Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. It thus appears first in the Hebrew Bible's Book of Genesis, but it is actually the younger of the two stories presented there. A considerable body of scholarship over the last two or three centuries has concluded that this story was written in about the sixth century B.C.. That was after Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and at a time when the Hebrews were faced with exile in Babylon.

The author of this later story is known to scholars as "P", because he or she wrote from a much more "priestly" perspective than J, the author of the chronologically earlier story that appears in Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 (see "Yahweh", above). P's story is one of creation ex nihilo (from nothing), and the creation is a much more stately process than that in J's story. Because of the timing of its writing and the grandeur of its language, P's story has been interpreted by scholars "as an origin story created for the benefit of a lost nation in the need of encouragement and affirmation" (Leeming and Leeming 1994, p. 113). In fact, some scholars have suggested that P's story was actually written in Babylon.

P used the name "Elohim" for the creator, and that usage is continued in the paraphrase below. "Elohim" (, pronounced "e lo HEEM") is actually a plural word perhaps best translated as "the powerful ones". P also used plural phrasing in the Elohim's creation of humankind "after our own likeness". Scholars have suggested that the use of the plural "Elohim" rather than the singular "Eloha" may hearken back to polytheistic roots of Middle Eastern religions and was a way to emphasize the magnitude of the deity in question. P's first people have no names at all, in keeping with the story's focus on the grandeur of the creator rather than on the created.

The Elohim

In the beginning the Elohim made the sky and the earth, but the earth was shapeless and everything was dark. The Elohim said "Let there be light," and there was the light that made day different from night. And that was the first day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be a dome to separate the heavens from the waters below," and there were the heavens. And that was the second day.

The Elohim said, "Let the waters of the earth gather so that there are seas and there is dry land," and so it was. The Elohim said, "Let there be vegetation on the land, with plants to yield seeds and fruits," and so it was. And that was the third day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be light in the heavens, and let them change with the seasons," and so there were stars. Then the Elohim made a sun and a moon to rule over the day and to rule over the night. And that was the fourth day.

The Elohim said, "Let there be creatures in the waters, and let there be birds in the skies," and so there were sea monsters and sea creatures and birds. The Elohim blessed

them, saying "Be fruitful and multiply". And that was the fifth day.

The Elohim said, "Let the earth have animals of various kinds", and so it was. Then the Elohim said, "Let us make humans after our own likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle and creeping things of the land, and over all the earth." The Elohim said to these humans, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, ruling over the fish and the birds and the animals of the land. We have given you every plant and tree yielding seed. To every beast and bird of the Earth we have given every green plant for food." And that was the sixth day.

And on the seventh day the making of the heavens and earth was finished, and the Elohim rested.

Sources for "The Elohim" and "Yahweh":

Norman C. Habel, 1971, *Literary Criticism of the Bible:* Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 86 p. (BS 1225.2 .H3)
David Adams Leeming and Margaret Adams Leeming, 1994, *Encyclopedia of Creation Myths:* Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 330 p. (BL 325.C7 L44 1994)
John Lawrence MacKenzie, 1966, "Pentateuch" and "Adam and Eve" in *Encyclopedia Britannica:* Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.
Herbert G. May, editor, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible:* New York, Oxford University Press, 1564 p.
Dagobert D. Runes, 1959, *Concise Dictionary of Judaism:* New York, Philosophical Library Inc., 237 p. (BM 50.R941c)
A.M. Silbermann, translator, 5745 [1985], *Chumash, with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth, and Rashi's Commentary, Vol. 1:* Jerusalem, The Silbermann Family, 281 + 29 p. (BS 1221 1985 v.1)
Julius Wellhausen, 1899, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bucher des Alten Testaments:* Berlin, G. Reimer, 373 p. (BS 1215.W4 1899)

A much more extensive bibliography is available at http://hope.edu/academic/religion/bandstra/RTOT/CH1/CH1_BG.HTM#C1

Other web pages of interest include
http://www.highfiber.com/~dfbeck/CESE/Viewpoint/contributions/bible/authorship.html
http://www.highfiber.com/~dfbeck/CESE/Viewpoint/contributions/bible/CREATIONSTORIES.html
http://freedomlaw.com/torahweb.htm
http://www.newberry.edu/acad/phil/r110/L03.htm (and succeeding lessons as well)
http://patriot.net/~jeb/dochyp.htm
http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/725/56.html
http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/379/87.html

This story comes from the Wichita people of southern Oklahoma and eastern Texas. The story was told by the Wichita chief, Towakoni Jim, to George Dorsey, who compiled Wichita stories. The Wichita religion centered on worship of the heavenly bodies, as the conclusion of this story suggests.

The Moon and the Morning Star

In the beginning there were neither sun, nor stars, nor anything else that we know today. For a long time, the only man was Man-never-known-on-Earth. He created everything. When he created the world, he created land and water, but they were not separate, and still everything was dark. Then Man-never-known-on-Earth created a man who was known as Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light and a woman named Bright-Shining-Woman. Everything that they needed, they dreamed of, and it was there when they awoke. Bright-Shining-Woman received an ear of corn and knew that it would be the food of generations to come.

Still there was nothing but darkness. Without knowing why, Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light began a journey to the east, moving slowly through the darkness. He came to a stranger who told him that there would be many villages and many people in the future, and that it would be up to Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light to teach them. As they talked, a voice from the east called to this stranger to shoot a black-and-white deer that would follow a white deer and a black deer out of a stream nearby. Four times the stranger had to tell the impatient voice that he was preparing a bow and arrow to shoot the deer. Finally he emerged from his lodge as the deer jumped out of the water, and he shot the black-and-white deer. This meant that the earth would turn, that the stars would move, and that there would be day and night. The stranger, whose name was Star-that-is-always-moving, went to follow the deer that he had wounded, but Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light stayed by the shore. From where the voice had spoken, he now saw the sun rise for the first time. He returned to his home, but he traveled much faster now that it was light. That night he saw three stars in the sky, with another star nearby, and he concluded that they were the three deer and the man who followed them.

After there was light, villages and people multiplied, as the stranger had predicted. Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light and Bright-Shining-Woman went from village to village, teaching the people. Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light taught the men about bows and arrows, and he taught them to play the ball game and the shinny game.

Bright-Shining-Woman taught the women about corn, how to grow corn, how to feed the people with corn, how to offer some corn at each meal to Man-never-known-on-Earth, how take four kernels and rub them on their child as a prayer. She also taught them the double-ball game. She told them that, after she was gone, they could look at her face to tell when their monthly bleeding should occur, and by counting her appearances they could keep track of when their children would be born. Then she left them, and that night

the first moon came up, because she was the Moon.

Man-with-the-Power-to-Carry-Light taught the men that they must offer some of the game that they caught to the moon and to the stars and to the other supernatural beings. He told them that he would leave them, but that they would see him sometimes in early morning. When they saw him, they were to take their children to drink and bathe in the river, which would give them long life. Then he left them and became the Morning Star.

George A. Dorsey, 1904, *The Mythology of the Wichita:* Washington, Carnegie Institution, 351 p. (E99.W6 D718).